

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 4948

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MMOL, SN, UK

SUBJ: ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MENDOLIA'S VISIT
TO SINGAPORE

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE FOR INSTALLATIONS AND LOGISTICS
MENDOLIA AND PARTY COMPLETED SUCCESSFUL ORIENTATION VISIT TO SINGAPORE

LOGISTIC FACILITIES. SECRETARY MET WITH SINGAPORE MINISTER OF
DEFENSE AND THE GROUP VISITED THE FOLLOWING INSTALLATIONS: SEMBAWANG
SHIPYARD, SINGAPORE ELECTRONIC AND ENGINEERING, COMMUNICATIONS
ELECTRONICS, CHARTERED INDUSTRIES OF SINGAPORE, AND LOCKHEED AIR
SERVICES SINGAPORE (LASS) CHANGI.

2. DURING CALL ON DEFENSE MINISTER GOH KENG SWEE, UK DECISION
TO WITHDRAW ALL FORCES FROM SINGAPORE WAS BRIEFLY DISCUSSED. MENDOLIA
SAID U.S. HOPED UK WOULD CONTINUE TO OPERATE NAVAL BASIN FOR AS
LONG A TIME AS POSSIBLE. DR. GOH IMMEDIATELY REPLIED THAT UK WITH-
DRAWAL WOULD BE TOTAL AND THAT TRANSFER OF NAVAL BASIN TO GOS WOULD
PROBABLY BE COMPLETED BY END OF 1975. MENDOLIA NOTED IMPORTANCE TO
U.S. NAVY OF PRESERVING SOME KIND OF ACCESS TO FUEL STORAGE FACILITY

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AT NAVAL BASIN AND OBSERVED THAT U.S. NAVY CURRENTLY LEASING PORTION

OF FUEL STORAGE FROM UK. DR. GOH APPEARED TO UNDERSTAND NAVY'S INTEREST AND INSTRUCTED PERMANENT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE PANG TEE POW TO KEEP U.S. ADVISED OF GOS DISCUSSIONS WITH BRITISH ON THIS MATTER.

3. LATER IN CONVERSATION, GOH SAID PORT OF SINGAPORE AUTHORITY WOULD BE GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR OPERATING FACILITIES IN NAVAL BASIN, BUT INDICATED AMMO STORAGE WOULD BE DISCONTINUED. SUBSEQUENTLY,

PERMSEC DEFENSE PANG TOLD CHARGE SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD WAS SEEKING TO OBTAIN ONE OR TWO BERTHS FROM NAVAL BASIN FOR ITS OWN USE.

4. CHARGE USED OCCASION TO POINT OUT TO DR. GOH OUR MUTUAL INTEREST IN KEEPING UK LONG-RANGE RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT (NIMRODS) OPERATING IN SINGAPORE. CHARGE NOTED THAT PHOTO RECONNAISSANCE INFORMATION

OBTAINED BY NIMRODS WAS SHARED WITH U.S. SEVENTH FLEET. DR. GOH INDICATED GOS QUITE WILLING TO HAVE NIMRODS STAY, BUT SAID THAT THIS WAS, OF COURSE, UP TO BRITISH. PANG SAID HE UNDERSTOOD BRITISH DEFENSE OFFICIALS HAD TAKEN POSITION THAT NIMRODS WERE EXPENSIVE TO OPERATE AND THEY WERE, THEREFORE, SCHEDULED FOR EARLY WITHDRAWAL.

5. COMMENT: CLEAR IMPLICATION OF DR. GOH'S REMARKS IS THAT GOS HAS NO INTENTION OF URGING UK TO MAINTAIN ANY FACILITIES AT NAVAL BASIN OR TO KEEP NIMRODS STATIONED AND OPERATING IN SINGAPORE. HOWEVER, GOS APPEARS TO BE RELATIVELY SYMPATHETIC TO U.S. NAVY FUEL NEEDS AND MAY BE WILLING TO MAKE SOME PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENT WITH RESPECT TO FUEL STORAGE WHICH WILL MEET OUR MINIMAL REQUIREMENTS. GRANT

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